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From Page:
3
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Funding causes 1357 Senior Action to make adjustments

By Liv Osby
HEALTH WRITER

Senior Action has restructured its operations amid funding challenges, and though there will be some layoffs, services aren't expected to be seriously affected, officials said.

"The challenge is to reduce how much we spend while keeping services, because expenses go up and federal and state dollars don't," said CEO Andrea G. Smith.

The nonprofit agency, which provides meals, transportation, activities and other services for seniors, has an annual budget of about \$1.5 million, she said.

Government funding makes up about three-quarters of the budget, while 20 percent is from the United Way, she said.

The rest comes from fundraisers, grants and other sources. Government funding has been static in recent years, while United Way cut its allocation two years ago, Smith said.

Salaries and utilities and other expenses continue to climb, she said. Transportation, for example, is a main service, and it has

been affected by soaring gas prices.

"Funding is more challenging every year," Smith said. "So we've looked at everything from how we provide services to the most cost-effective way to provide them."

There are 48 full- and part-time employees, or 26 full-time equivalents, she said. The agency will lose about five FTEs. Most are in the home care and care management departments, she said. The restructuring means those who remain will perform different functions more efficiently, she said.

"We have changed job descriptions and changed what people do," she said.

The agency has about 1,000 paying members, and it serves about 50,000 free meals each year to seniors, she said. It has nine locations throughout the area and wants to enhance services at remote sites, she said.

The move also is aimed at enhancing access to programs, Smith said.

"We do a great job with social activities, but there are people who need us who fall through the gap," she said. "Ultimately, the desire is that there's something for everybody and everyone feels welcome."



Smith